

## Frequently Asked Questions

# Removal of dead ash trees from Pokagon State Park



Pokagon was the first state park in Indiana to note the presence of the emerald ash borer, a tiny beetle from China first discovered in Michigan nearly 10 years ago. Since then, the beetles have expanded in ever-widening circles, killing ash trees in their path. Park officials are now faced with removing damaged ash trees. Two methods will be used this winter of 2011-2012. A timber sale will take place to remove the dead and dying ash trees that are marketable (greater than 14 inches) and local residents will be able to cut and remove firewood for trees less than 14 inches and in special areas.

### **How does the timber sale work?**

Professional foresters from the Indiana DNR evaluate the ash trees and mark those to be cut and sold with spray paint. Licensed timber buyers visit the park and place a sealed bid on the marked trees. Bids will be evaluated by IDNR Division of Forestry staff members who regularly manage timber sales on State Forest land. After the bid is awarded and a contract negotiated and signed, the trees may be removed.

### **Why can't park officials just cut up the trees as they fall?**

These trees have the potential to damage buildings and utilities if they fall, and the problem is much bigger than staff can handle in one winter. One thousand eight hundred twenty five trees (1,825) have been marked. This sale is the most efficient way to remove these trees before the next recreation season.

### **Will all dead ash trees be cut?**

No. Only ash trees that are in or near to picnic areas, campgrounds, roads, buildings, utilities and other managed areas will be removed. Ash trees in the forest will stay, where they will provide habitat for wildlife and eventually fall and decompose to rebuild forest soil.

### **Where can I find information on bidding?**

Information on bidding has been sent to all licensed timber buyers. You can find out more about becoming a licensed timber buyer at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2846.htm>.

### **How can I cut and remove firewood for my home woodstove?**

Affected ash trees under 14 inches in diameter and trees in campgrounds that might contain debris that could damage sawmill equipment will be dropped and made available for local residents to cut up and haul away as firewood for \$5 per pick-up truck load. You must obtain a firewood permit at the park office between 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on weekdays beginning Dec. 7. Days, hours and access to areas for cutting will be determined as the project progresses and by immediate weather conditions. Locations will be identified when you purchase your permit. Cutting is not allowed on weekends or during the week between Christmas and New Years to limit disturbance to park visitors. For additional details, call the park office at 260-833-2012.

### **Will I have to pay to enter the park to cut and buy firewood?**

Normal park entry fees will be charged (\$5 for in-state vehicles, \$7 for out-of-state vehicles, or an annual entrance pass) when the front gate is staffed.

**What about the emerald ash borer in the firewood I take?**

Northern Indiana has been declared “generally infested” by the emerald ash borer, which allows you to transport ash wood across county lines within this “generally infested” area. You cannot, however, transport this firewood into Michigan or Ohio; it is against federal law to transport ash across state lines. It is your responsibility to know and understand quarantine boundaries. You can find details at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/entomolo/3443.htm>. If you anticipate that you will bring any of this wood to Pokagon or to other state parks, reservoirs or state forests during camping trips, all bark must be removed as required by our DNR firewood policy.



The emerald ash borer (not to scale!). Several of these tiny beetles could fit on the face of a penny.

**Will I see damage by log skidders and trucks?**

Licensed timber buyers use established best management practices for removing logs, causing the least amount of damage possible. You can read more about these best management practices at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2871.htm>. Since most of the work will be along roads and in managed areas, the damage to natural areas should be minimal and will be repaired as time allows.

**Will logs be removed from the Potawatomi Nature Preserve within Pokagon State Park?**

No. Only affected trees along the park entrance road that bisects the Nature Preserve will be removed.

**What will happen to income from the sale of timber and firewood?**

All funds generated by the sale of timber and firewood will be returned to the park and used for resource management projects such as replacing trees in the campgrounds and in picnic areas and for other ecosystem restoration projects.

**When will this work take place?**

The sale of marketable trees and firewood will begin in December, and we anticipate completion by the next summer recreation season. The need for additional tree removal will be evaluated each season.

**Will timber and firewood sales take place in other Indiana State Parks?**

Timber sales have taken place on other properties when storms dropped a lot of trees and we needed a quick way to remove them. Funds generated by these sales when they occur are designated for natural resource management projects. Timber and firewood sales may occur on a case by case basis at other properties as circumstances warrant.

**How can I get further information on this?**

Contact the Pokagon State Park office at 260-833-2012.

Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs  
Pokagon State Park  
450 Lane 100 Lake James  
Angola, IN 46703



State Parks & Reservoirs on the Web: [www.stateparks.IN.gov](http://www.stateparks.IN.gov)

Science and natural resources in state parks and reservoirs: [www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/6288.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/6288.htm)

*Thank you for your interest in our initiative to remove dead and dying ash trees from Pokagon State Park.*

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